

OWEN Electric Connection

Owen Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

SEPTEMBER 2017

Honor Flight 2017

Giving our veterans one perfect day

Ralph Johnson and Wesley Brenton experienced one of many highlights in their lives on Aug. 27, 2016, on the Honor Flight sponsored by Owen Electric and Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

Johnson and Brenton, veterans from Warsaw and Sadieville, respectively, traveled with 41 other Kentucky vets and their guardians on a one-day trip from Lexington to Washington, D.C. Everything was coordinated by Winchester-based Honor Flight Kentucky.

As the group got off the plane at Reagan International Airport, a gauntlet of soldiers and civilians shook their hands. The West Point Men's Chorus sang songs of the U.S. Armed Forces, while people across the packed terminal cheered and waved flags. After Johnson, Brenton, and the vets boarded buses, a police cruiser cleared traffic, flashed blue lights, and led them

to memorials dedicated to their service during World War II, Korea, and the Vietnam Wars.

Johnson was 22 years old when he was drafted and served three years and three months in post artillery with the Army, guarding the locks in Panama during World War II. He recalls that as his convoy was coming through Cuba and the Yucatan Peninsula, one of their ships was sunk.

Brenton was a forward observer in artillery with the Marines in the Vietnam War, but did some flying as well when higher-ups learned he was a pilot. He served 19 months with the Marines, and unfortunately has been affected greatly by Agent Orange. Brenton said he has "no regrets" serving in the military for his country.

More than 34,000 other Americans never came home, and that's why Owen Electric sponsors Honor Flight: to remember those who died and thank our veterans for defending our freedoms.

On Saturday, Sept. 16, Honor Flight 2017 will fly another mission with 70 Kentucky heroes aboard. This is the seventh year we've sponsored Honor Flight,

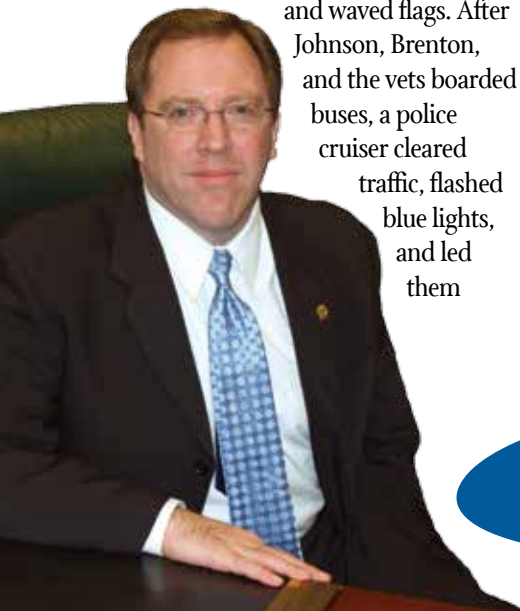


Ralph Johnson and Wesley Brenton prepare to go on the trip of a lifetime during the 2016 Honor Flight at Blue Grass Airport in Lexington.

and this year, Owen Electric is sponsoring members Robert Hood and Tom Nicodemus, both Vietnam War veterans.

I am personally inviting you, your family, and your friends to support this year's mission by being there when we welcome the 2017 group home. The veterans will land at Lexington's Blue Grass Airport around 9 p.m. on Sept. 16, and we hope you will help us thank them for their service.

We owe our veterans so much. Don't miss this opportunity. Let's give them the best day of their lives.



Mark Stallons
President/CEO

Miracles really do happen

Most students entering college will find the extent of their worries is getting into desired classes, learning the campus and new social circles, and adjusting to life away from home.

For Lynsey Farrar, who began her freshman year at Georgetown College four years ago, this transitory period quickly became far scarier than anyone could have anticipated. It began with swollen ankles.

“She called me from Georgetown on a Wednesday around 11 p.m. and told me she took her shoes off and her ankles were swollen; I told her to send me a picture,” recalls Sherra Dunlap, Lynsey’s mother. “When she did, I knew something wasn’t right. I told her I was making an appointment for some blood work in the morning, and her response to me was that she didn’t want to miss school, and to make it on Friday if possible.”

In the meantime, Lynsey, a high school athlete, proficient in golf and softball, was experiencing a myriad of symptoms. With swelling persisting, the whites of her eyes had yellowed, and she became ill in class the next morning.

“I knew something was definitely wrong,” Lynsey says.

At first, doctors didn’t seem too alarmed with Lynsey’s condition, speculating at one point it could be the result of an acne medicine she had been taking; but, a mother’s intuition and Lynsey’s own worsening symptoms drove them to press for more tests and answers.

By the following Friday, Lynsey was on life support.

Extensive testing revealed Wilson’s Disease, a genetic disorder passed from parents, where copper builds up in the body, particularly in the liver and brain. The disease is treatable with medication if detected early, but otherwise is fatal.

“Terrified” from the onset of her illness forward, by the time doctors declared she would need a liver transplant immediately,



Lynsey graduated cum laude from Georgetown College with a major in chemistry and a minor in biology on the pre-pharmacy track in May. Photo: Sokheang Ty

Lynsey was on a ventilator and unaware of what was going on.

Sherra remembers vividly.

“My thoughts were that I cannot do one thing to change it. I felt helpless and useless. It was all in God’s hands,” Sherra says. “It was a roller coaster—I was nervous, scared...I was sick to my stomach, and I felt responsible. It was a genetic disorder she received from me and her dad, and I felt guilty for not knowing she had been born with it, not that there was anything any of us could have done to prevent it. She had no symptoms of this disease until it was almost too late...she almost lost her life.”

While Lynsey’s family was at her bedside, her community rallied with support from well wishes and prayer chains. Sherra attributes her faith in God, that “unbelievable” showing of support, as well as Lynsey’s younger sister, Debbie, to keeping her and others going during an excruciating period of uncertainty and fear.

In the words of Sherra, miracles really do happen—a liver was found.

“I literally jumped on the doctor who delivered the news to her dad and me,” Sherra says. “I was so very thankful and

relieved and just so emotional to be so blessed to be witnessing a miracle. They found her a liver in less than 12 hours, and that is very rare.”

Overwhelming thankfulness also comes with other emotions as well, as this was not Sherra’s first experience with organ donation.

“I also felt guilt—guilt for the family that had just lost a loved one. I have been on that side as well. My mother passed at 40 years old and we chose to donate her organs,” Sherra says. “It’s sad, and it’s hurtful and painful, so I felt a lot of



Lynsey waits for lab results one month post-transplant.



Debbie and Lynsey Farrar, along with their mother, Sherra Dunlap, are vocal supporters of the Donate Life initiative.

guilt celebrating a second chance with my daughter as someone else was grieving a loved one.”

Even with a new liver, Lynsey was not out of the woods completely. Close attention was given over the next days and months to monitor Lynsey’s recovery and watch for signs of rejection.

“The thing that kept me going was that God was watching over me and the power of prayer.” Lynsey says. “Everyone who prayed, sent me texts, cards, and letters helped me stay positive because it was so empowering and encouraging. I kept myself going by praying. I knew that God had something planned for me, and finishing school was my goal. I wanted to heal fast so I could get back into school.”

And finish she did. On time.

“I think my situation had a lot to do with my motivation to finish on time. I made it to my goal to finish my undergraduate degree in four years, and to go to pharmacy school. My doctors as first did not want me to finish my freshman semester—they wanted me to take time to try to relax and heal at home. I did not like the idea of starting over, so I pushed through,” Lynsey says.

Lynsey graduated cum laude from Georgetown College with a major in chemistry and a minor in biology on the pre-pharmacy track. She was involved in the ACS (American Chemical Society) Club, a member of Alpha Lambda Delta

Honor Society, and Sigma Kappa sorority. This fall, she is headed to the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy.

Going forward, Lynsey has been a walking testimony for the Kentucky Organ Donation Affiliates (KODA) and Trust for Life.

“The organ donation program is outstanding—they

are the voice of organ donation and why it is important,” Lynsey says. “I encourage everyone to sign up as an organ donor, because it is one of the most selfless things you can do. Becoming a donor, you are becoming someone’s hero. It is a life’s choice that doesn’t just change the life of a recipient; it affects the family and friends as well.”

Lynsey has had the opportunity to share her experience with 200 residents during their orientation at the University of Kentucky, and also the Gift of Life ceremony, which honors those who have passed but chosen to donate their organs. She has spoken at assemblies for Owen County High School and Georgetown College; and she has shared her personal testimony both at her church, Sanders Baptist, and at the annual golf scramble benefitting the Trust for Life’s Judge Charles Satterwhite Recipient Assistance Fund.

“My second chance at life has given me the strength and determination to do anything. It has given me so many eye-opening opportunities in my community and others, to spread the word about organ donation and to share my story.

Not only has my story led me to promote organ donation, it has allowed me to promote God’s great gift of his miracles being put to work,” Lynsey says.

She also stays in touch with her nurses and surgeon.

“They are the most genuine people I have ever met—they truly have touched my life, and they care about every single patient.”

The experience inspires Lynsey to embrace every challenge and opportunity that presents itself.

“My second chance has made me view life differently. The little things don’t seem to matter as much. If I could, I would not have changed my situation. I view what happened as a positive thing, and not a negative,” Lynsey says. “This gift has made me stronger in faith and has helped me form relationships with my doctors and nurses and given me several other opportunities.”

From a mother’s perspective, it has been humbling.

“I am more emotional and my faith in God has remained strong. It makes you so much more appreciative of the little things in life and the people in your life,” Sherra says. “Her will to never give up inspires me—she is so focused, so positive and goal-driven. She’s amazing...she loves life and goes out and lives it.”

Even accomplishing as much as she has and with more good things on the horizon as she begins pharmacy school, Lynsey stops to think of her donor and the donor’s family daily.

“Given the opportunity, I would tell them that their loved one was selfless, and a true hero. I would tell them that I pray for them every day, and that I am sorry for their loss, but their loved one’s decision allowed them to live on. I hope one day I can be someone’s hero just like how their loved one is my hero.”

For more information on organ donation, or to sign up to be a donor, log on to www.kyorgandonor.org.

Sherra Dunlap is the Human Resources administrator for Owen Electric; many thanks to Sherra and Lynsey for sharing their story.

2017 ANNUAL MEETING

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